

THE NAVAJO NATION


 BEN SHELLY ^{PRESIDENT}
 REX LEE JIM ^{VICE PRESIDENT}

Received & Inspected

AUG 04 2014

FCC Mail Room

July 25, 2014

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

 Chairman Thomas Wheeler
 Federal Communications Commission
 445 12th Street SW
 Washington, DC 20554

Re: *In the Matter of Navajo Pillars Telecommunications, Inc. Petition for Designation as an Eligible Telecommunication Carrier, CC Docket No. 96-45, WC Docket 10-90, GN Docket No. 09-51, WC Docket No. 07-135, WC Docket No. 05-337, CC Docket No. 01-92*

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write to you today to voice my support for the pending ETC petition of Navajo Pillars Telecommunications, Inc., and request expedited processing of that petition.

Navajo Pillars, owned by a member of the Navajo tribe, filed its ETC Petition on September 13, 2013. By *Public Notice*, DA 13-2100, dated October 30, 2013, the FCC requested comments on the Pillars ETC Petition be filed by December 2, 2013. Our Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (NNTRC) filed supporting comments, and attached thereto a Conditional Certificate of Convenience and Necessity, adopted by the NNTRC on October 10, 2013, demonstrating that Navajo Pillars is subject to the jurisdiction of NNTRC and the laws of the Navajo Nation. No opposing comments were filed.

I have made bringing state-of-the-art telecommunications services to the Navajo people a priority for my administration, and will continue to support efforts of those such as Navajo Pillars that have committed to bring new and upgraded services to the Navajo people. As recently as 15 years ago, telephone penetration on the Navajo Nation was barely 20 percent. With the support of programs such as the Universal Service Fund, we have raised that to 80 percent. But there is still work to do, especially to bring telephone service to the most remote areas of the Navajo Nation.

Navajo Pillars has accepted that challenge and seeks to serve 239 square miles and potentially 2,282 subscribers in the Smoke Signal and Blue Gap Chapter House regions of the Navajo Nation in Arizona, where the incumbent carrier, Navajo Communications Company (Frontier), has chosen not to provide service because of the remoteness of the area.

Navajo Pillars is seeking support from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), but cannot demonstrate its ability to repay RUS loans absent USF support, which requires a grant of ETC status and the waiver of certain administrative rules. Navajo Pillars, therefore, cannot proceed with seeking

 No. of Copies rec'd _____
 List ABCDE _____

RUS loan support until the ETC Petition is granted. Efforts to bring service to these unserved areas thus are stalled until the FCC acts on the pending Petition.

As the President of the Navajo Nation, therefore, I request that you give this matter your attention and direct the appropriate FCC bureaus to process and grant this petition as quickly as possible.

I have directed NNTRC to assist you and your staff in answering any questions regarding this matter.

Kindest Regards,


Ben Shelly, *President*
THE NAVAJO NATION